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Epstein email says Trump 'knew about the girls' as White House calls its release a Democratic smear

By **MICHAEL R. SISAK and ERIC TUCKER**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeffrey Epstein wrote in a 2019 email to a journalist that Donald Trump “knew about the girls,” according to documents made public Wednesday, but what he knew and whether it pertained to the sex offender’s crimes is unclear. The White House quickly accused Democrats of selectively leaking the emails to smear the president.

Democrats on the House Oversight Committee released three emails referencing Trump, including one Epstein wrote in 2011 in which he told confidant Ghislaine Maxwell that Trump had “spent hours” at Epstein’s house with a sex trafficking victim.

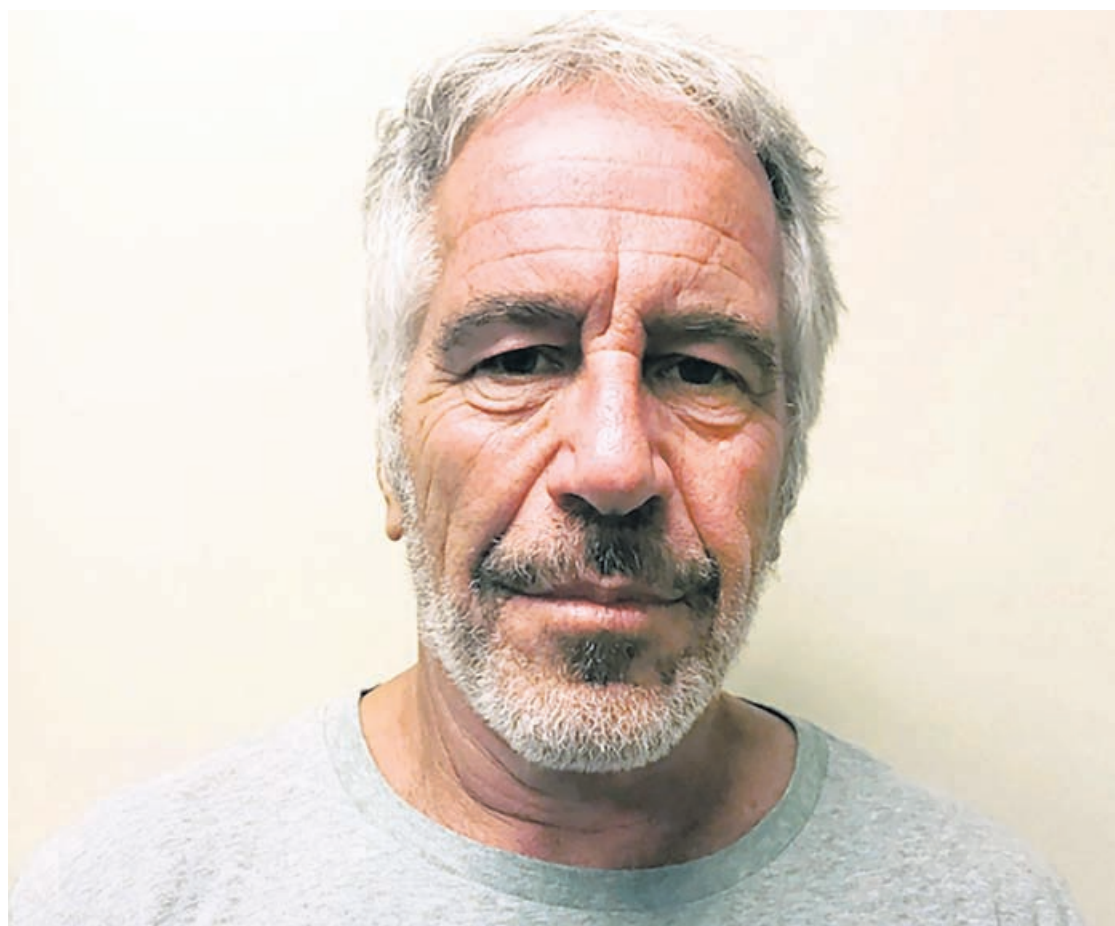
The disclosures seemed designed to raise new questions about Trump’s friendship with Epstein and about what knowledge he may have had regarding what prosecutors call a yearslong effort by Epstein to exploit underage girls. The Republican businessman-turned-politician has consistently denied any knowledge of Epstein’s crimes and has said he ended their relationship years ago.

The version of the 2011 email released by the Democrats redacted the name of the victim, but Republicans on the committee later said it was Virginia Giuffre, who accused Epstein of arranging for her to have sexual encounters with a number of his rich and powerful friends. Epstein took his own life in a New York jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on federal charges.

The emails made public Wednesday are part of a batch of 23,000 documents provided by Epstein’s estate to the Oversight Committee.

Giuffre said Trump “couldn’t have been friendlier” Giuffre, who died earlier this year, had long insisted that Trump was not among the men who had victimized her.

In a court deposition, she said under oath that she



This photo provided by the New York State Sex Offender Registry shows Jeffrey Epstein, March 28, 2017.

didn’t believe Trump had any knowledge of Epstein’s misconduct with underage girls. And in her recently released memoir, she described meeting Trump only once, when she worked as a spa attendant at his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, and did not accuse him of wrongdoing.

Giuffre wrote that she was introduced to Trump by her father, who also worked at the club. She described Trump as friendly and said he offered to help her get babysitting jobs with parents at the club.

Trump “couldn’t have been friendlier,” Giuffre wrote. Other members of Epstein’s household staff also said in sworn depositions that, while Trump did stop by Epstein’s house, they didn’t see him engage in any inappropriate conduct.

Republicans says emails released to tarnish Trump White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said Democrats “selectively leaked emails” to “create a fake narrative to smear President Trump.”

Trump, writing on his Truth Social platform, said Democrats “are trying to bring

up the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax again because they’ll do anything at all to deflect on how badly they’ve done” on the government shut-down “and so many other subjects.”

“There should be no deflections to Epstein or anything else, and any Republicans involved should be focused only on opening up our Country, and fixing the massive damage caused by the Democrats!” Trump wrote.

In July, Trump said he had banned Epstein from Mar-a-Lago because his one-time friend was “taking people who worked for me,” including Giuffre. The women, he said, were “taken out of the spa, hired by him in other words, gone.” “I said, ‘Listen, we don’t want you taking our people,’” Trump told reporters. Asked if Giuffre was one of the employees poached by Epstein, the president demurred but then said Epstein “stole her.”

Shortly after Democrats released the Trump-related emails, committee Republicans countered by disclosing what they said was an additional 20,000 pages of

documents from Epstein’s estate. Among them: copies of pages from a James Patterson book about the ex-financier.

Emails revive questions about Trump’s relationship with Epstein

The release resurfaces a storyline that had shadowed Trump’s presidency during the summer when the FBI and the Justice Department abruptly announced that they would not be releasing additional documents that investigators had spent weeks examining, disappointing conspiracy theorists and online sleuths who had expected to see new revelations. In one 2019 email to journalist Michael Wolff, who has written extensively about Trump, Epstein wrote of Trump,

“Of course he knew about the girls as he asked Ghislaine to stop.”

In an April 2, 2011, email to Maxwell, a former Epstein girlfriend now imprisoned for conspiring to engage in sex trafficking, Epstein wrote, “I want you to realize that that dog that hasn’t barked is Trump. (Redacted name) spent hours

at my house with him .. he has never once been mentioned. police chief. etc. im 75 % there.”

Maxwell replied the same day: “I have been thinking about that.”

The name of the person said to have spent time with Trump was blacked out of the email, but House Democrats identified the person as a “victim.”

Leavitt said that the unnamed person referenced in the emails is Giuffre, who had accused Britain’s then-Prince Andrew and other influential men of sexually exploiting her as a teenager and who died by suicide in April. Andrew, who recently was stripped of his titles and evicted from his royal residence by King Charles III after weeks of pressure to act over his relationship with Epstein, has rejected Giuffre’s allegations and said he didn’t recall meeting her.

Leavitt said in a statement that Giuffre had “repeatedly said President Trump was not involved in any wrongdoing whatsoever and ‘couldn’t have been friendlier’ to her in their limited interactions.”

“The fact remains that President Trump kicked Jeffrey Epstein out of his club decades ago for being a creep to his female employees, including Giuffre,” the statement said. “These stories are nothing more than bad-faith efforts to distract from President Trump’s historic accomplishments, and any American with common sense sees right through this hoax and clear distraction from the government opening back up again.”

Messages seeking comment were left with Wolff, Maxwell attorney David Markus and representatives for Giuffre’s family.

Maxwell’s interview with the Justice Department Maxwell, interviewed in July by the Justice Department’s second-in-command, repeatedly denied witnessing any sexually inappropriate interactions involving Trump. □

UK's Starmer refuses to say whether he will urge Trump to drop his \$1 billion BBC threat



A view of the logo outside the BBC Headquarters in London, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025. Associated Press .

By PAN PYLAS
LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer refused to say Wednesday whether he would urge U.S. President Donald Trump to drop his threat to sue the BBC for \$1 billion over the broadcaster's edit of a speech he made after losing the 2020 presidential election. During his weekly question

and answer session in the House of Commons, Starmer was asked by Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, whether he would intervene in the dispute between Trump and the British public broadcaster, and to rule out the idea that the British taxpayers who fund the BBC would have to hand over money to the U.S. presi-

dent. Instead of responding directly, Starmer reiterated the government's line since BBC Director-General Tim Davie announced his resignation on Sunday because of the scandal. "I believe in a strong and independent BBC," he said. "Some would rather BBC didn't exist, I'm not one of

them." However, he added that "where mistakes are made, they do need to get their house in order." In an interview that aired Tuesday on Fox News, Trump said he intended to go through with his threat to sue the BBC, a century-old institution under growing pressure in an era of polarized politics and changing media viewing habits. "I guess I have to," he said. "Because I think they defrauded the public and they've admitted it." The president's lawyer, Alejandro Brito, sent the threat to the BBC over the way a documentary edited his Jan. 6, 2021, speech before a mob of his followers stormed the U.S. Capitol. The letter demanded an apology to the president and a "full and fair" retraction of the documentary along with other "false, defamatory, disparaging, misleading or inflammatory statements" about Trump. If the BBC does not comply with the demands by 5 p.m. EST Friday, then Trump will enforce his legal rights, the

letter said. The BBC has said it will "respond directly in due course" to the letter. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Wednesday that "the president's external legal counsel has filed a lawsuit against the BBC. We expect that to continue. And whether they apologize or not is up to them." Trump and Starmer have a good relationship, Leavitt said, but likely disagree on whether the BBC is fair, with the president regarding it as "a leftist propaganda machine." The dispute was sparked by an edition of the BBC's flagship current affairs series "Panorama," titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" broadcast days before the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The third-party production company that made the film spliced together three quotes from two sections of the 2021 speech, delivered almost an hour apart, into what appeared to be one quote in which Trump urged supporters to march with him and "fight like hell." □

Search for trapped worker inside a West Virginia coal mine is a rescue operation, governor says

By JOHN RABY
Associated Press

Crews desperately continued removing massive amounts of water in an effort to locate a trapped worker inside a flooded coal mine in West Virginia as the work entered a fifth day Wednesday. Gov. Patrick Morrisey said the efforts by crews about three-fourths of a mile into the Rolling Thunder Mine remained a rescue operation. Machines were pumping out water at a rate of 6,000 gallons (22,712 liters) per minute, he said. That's enough to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool in under two hours. "I think people are doing everything imaginable," Morrisey said. "There's no quit in anyone here." A mining crew hit an unknown pocket of water

Saturday about three-quarters of a mile into the mine near Belva, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of the state capital of Charleston. The mine flooded after an old mine wall "was compromised," and multiple state agencies were involved in the response, Morrisey said. Other miners were accounted for after the accident was reported. Morrisey said he had no estimate on the number of crews working on the rescue effort inside the mine, but "obviously there are a lot of machines pulling the water out." "There's a lot of water that's been drained, but there's also a massive amount in there that still needs to be drained," he said. In addition, holes have

been drilled in the mine, and dive teams were on site, the governor said. The National Cave Rescue Commission has provided surplus Army phones attached to wires that can travel great distances to enable for better underground communication. Rolling Thunder is one of 11 underground mines operated in West Virginia by Tennessee-based Alpha Metallurgical Resources Inc. The company also operates four surface mines in the state, as well as three underground and one surface mine in Virginia. Morrisey said the abandoned mine next to Rolling Thunder had been worked on in the 1930s and 1940s. A report prepared in February for Alpha by an engineering consulting firm, Marshall Miller & Associ-

ates, said the area had been "extensively explored" by previous mine owners, generating "a significant amount of historical data" that Alpha examined in assessing its potential for producing coal. The same report says that

the Rolling Thunder coal seam runs along and below the drainage of TwentyMile Creek, but said there were "no significant hydrologic concerns" about digging for more coal in the extensively mined property. □



In this image taken from a video provided by WCHS, an emergency vehicle drives past a sign for the Rolling Thunder mine near Drennen, W.Va., Sunday, Nov. 9, 2025. Associated Press.

Israel's president says 'shocking' settler violence against Palestinians must end

By **MELANIE LIDMAN and JULIA FRANKEL**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's president and high-ranking military officials on Wednesday condemned attacks a day earlier by Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank, calling for an end to a growing wave of settler violence in the occupied territory.

President Isaac Herzog described the attacks as "shocking and serious," adding a rare and powerful voice to what has been muted criticism by top Israeli officials of the settler violence. Herzog's position, while largely ceremonial, is meant to serve as a moral compass and unifying force for the country.

Herzog said the violence committed by a "handful" of perpetrators "crosses a red line," adding in a social media post that "all state authorities must act decisively to eradicate the phenomenon."

His remarks, and those of two high-ranking military officials, came after dozens of masked Israeli settlers attacked the Palestinian villages of Beit Lid and Deir Sharaf in the West Bank on Tuesday, setting fire to vehicles and other property before clashing with Israeli soldiers.

Also on Wednesday, Israel reopened a crossing into the northern Gaza Strip that had been closed for two months. The move was welcomed by officials at the United Nations, who say Israel has been too slow in surging humanitarian aid to the territory since a ceasefire began last month. Aid has been delivered into Gaza since Oct. 10 through two crossings in the southern and central Gaza.

Military leaders react to settler violence in the West Bank

The Israeli army's chief of staff, Eyal Zamir, echoed Herzog's condemnations of the West Bank violence, saying the military "will not tolerate the phenomena of a minority of criminals who tarnish a law-abiding public."



Palestinians and journalists survey damage in an industrial zone following an attack by Israeli settlers the previous day in the West Bank village of Beit Lid, near Tulkarm, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025.

Associated Press .

He said the army is committed to stopping violent acts committed by settlers, which he described as contrary to Israeli values and that "divert the attention of our forces from fulfilling their mission."

The chief of the military's Central Command, Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth, said responding to an "anarchist fringe" requires the use of significant resources that could otherwise be focused on bolstering security and conducting counterterrorism operations.

The army said the settlers who attacked the villages fled to a nearby industrial zone and attacked soldiers responding to the violence, damaging a military vehicle. Police said four Israelis were arrested, while the military said four Palestinians were wounded.

On Wednesday, police said three of the suspects were released and that one, a minor arrested on suspicion of arson and assault, will remain in custody for six more days, as ordered by a judge. Police said the actions of the three who were released are still under investigation "with the goal of bringing offenders to justice, regardless of their

background."

Settler violence has surged Tuesday's violence in the West Bank was the latest in a series of attacks by young settlers that have surged since the war in Gaza erupted two years ago. The attacks have intensified in recent weeks as Palestinians harvest their olive trees in an annual ritual.

The U.N. humanitarian office last week reported more Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank in October than in any other month since it began keeping track in 2006. There were over 260 attacks, the office said.

Palestinians and human rights workers accuse the Israeli army and police of failing to halt attacks by settlers. Israel's government is dominated by far-right proponents of the settler movement including Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who formulates settlement policy, and Cabinet minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who oversees the nation's police force.

Muayyad Shaaban, who heads an office in the Palestinian Authority that is tracking the violence, said the settlers set fire to four dairy trucks, farmland, tin

shacks and tents belonging to a Bedouin community.

He said the attacks were part of a campaign to drive Palestinians from their land and accused Israel of giving the settlers protection and immunity. He called for sanctions against groups that "sponsor and support the colonial settlement terrorism project."

Palestinians react angrily In Beit Lid, residents said they don't want their lives ruled by fear of settler violence.

Mahmoud Edeis said the violence is undermining his family's right to live in safety. "To feel that my children are safe, that when I go to sleep I can say, 'Okay, there's nothing (to worry about),' " he said. "But at any moment something could happen ... This can't go on. It can't be that we keep living our whole lives in a state of fear and danger."

Amjad Amer Al-Juneidi, who works at a dairy factory that was attacked Tuesday, said the "fully organized" attack saw one person carrying gasoline-filled cans, another prying open the factory door with a crowbar and a third individual igniting the fuel.

"Their entry into the company wasn't random. It was organized, and they had a fully organized tactic for how to carry out the burning," Al-Juneidi said.

UN officials say more aid is needed in Gaza

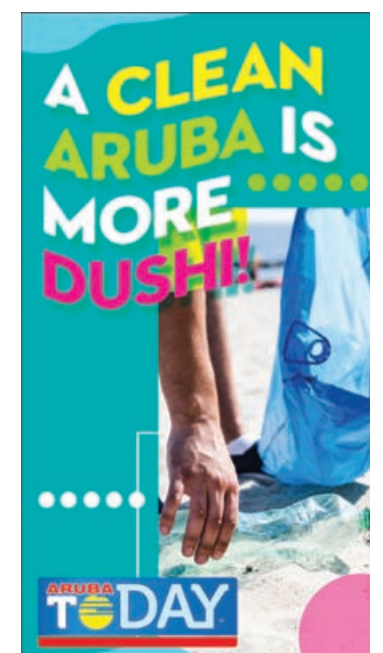
While U.N. officials welcomed the Israeli decision to reopen the Zikim crossing into northern Gaza, they also reiterated criticism of Israel for not doing more.

Stephane Dujarric, the U.N. spokesperson, said Wednesday that humanitarian groups in Gaza are being hampered in their ability to distribute food once it arrives in the territory and having to "stretch out the available stocks."

The demand for baby formula, for example, far exceeds the current supply, UNICEF spokesperson Ricardo Pires told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Pires said there are also concerns about whether there will be enough syringes to carry out a vaccination campaign that began this month and will continue into January. He said there could be supply problems starting next month if Israel doesn't allow greater shipments into Gaza.

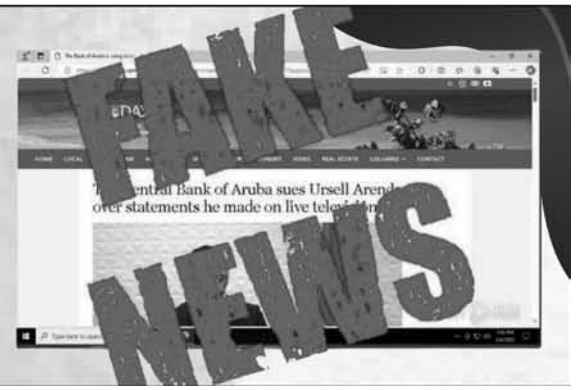
The Israeli agency in charge of humanitarian aid in Gaza, COGAT, said in a statement on Tuesday that "Israel is fully committed to its obligation to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid trucks in accordance with the (ceasefire) agreement." □



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Supporters of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani cheer in Tahrir Square, Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025, after results showed al-Sudani's bloc won the largest amount of seats in the parliamentary election.

Associated Press.

Prime minister's coalition makes a strong showing in Iraqi elections, but no single bloc dominates

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi election officials announced the preliminary results of Iraq's parliamentary elections Wednesday, showing continued dominance of traditional powers in their respective regions, alongside some surprises. The Reconstruction and Change coalition led by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani won the highest number of seats in 8 out of 18 provinces, including Baghdad, Najaf, Qadisiyah, Karbala, Muthanna, Maysan, Dhi Qar, and Babil.

While al-Sudani's bloc made a strong showing, no single bloc achieved a comfortable victory that would allow it to form a government independently, meaning the formation of the next government will require deal-making among the strongest blocs

to secure a majority.

In several past elections in Iraq, the bloc winning the most seats has not been able to impose its preferred candidate.

That includes the last parliamentary election, in 2021, when the Sadrist Movement led by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr won the largest number of seats but later withdrew after failed negotiations over forming a government, amid a standoff with rival Shiite parties. Sadr has since boycotted the political system and called on his supporters to boycott this year's election.

The final turnout in the elections was 56% of registered voters, election officials said. That includes both Tuesday's general vote and the special voting held on Sunday for members of the military and security forces and internally

displaced people living in camps.

Turnout was lower in areas with large numbers of Sadr supporters, including Baghdad and Najaf.

The biggest surprise came in Nineveh, a predominantly Sunni Arab province, where the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) secured the highest number of seats, an unexpected shift for observers. Meanwhile, in Diyala province, which has a significant Kurdish minority, no Kurdish candidates won seats for the first time since 2005. Baghdad, Nineveh, and the southern province of Basra are the provinces with the highest number of seats: 71 in Baghdad, 34 in Nineveh, and 25 in Basra. Al-Sudani's coalition won in Baghdad, the KDP in Nineveh, and the Tasmeem list, led by Basra Governor Asaad al-Eidani, in Basra. □

Court hears case to disqualify Central African Republic's president from December election



Central African Republic President Faustin Archange Touadera addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025, at U.N. headquarters.

Associated Press.

By JEAN FERNAND KOENA

BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP) — A constitutional court in the Central African Republic on Wednesday began hearings on a petition seeking to disqualify the country's leader from running in the upcoming December presidential election.

The petition filed by the Observatory for Democratic Governance, a civil society group, argued that President Faustin Archange Touadera should be disqualified on the grounds of not meeting the criteria for running for the presidency.

Elysée Nguimalé, president of the group, challenged the origin of the president's name, claiming it suggests his family cannot be traced a lineage requirement under the country's constitution.

"The name Touadera in his mother tongue means a child abandoned by his maternal uncles," Nguimalé said in his petition. He noted that the name, under Article 65 of the country's Family Code, signifies that the father is unknown and that "since his father is unknown, his origin is ambiguous."

It was not immediately clear whether the court will uphold the argument or how quickly a verdict will be reached.

Territorial Administration Minister Bruno Yapandé dismissed Nguimalé's petition, calling it a tool intended to "sow confusion among the public."

The final list of candidates for the election is yet to be published. The president is running for a third term, which would extend his rule into the second decade a move made possible after scrapping term limits in 2023.

The court case comes as the government has refused to issue opposition leader Anicet Georges Dologuélé a passport, rendering him potentially stateless. □

Top Ukrainian ministers submit their resignations as the country is rocked by a corruption scandal

By **SAMYA KULLAB**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Russia's renewed attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure cause rolling blackouts ahead of winter, a major embezzlement and kickbacks scandal involving the state-owned nuclear power company has put top officials under scrutiny.

It's fast becoming one of the most significant government crises since Moscow's full-scale invasion, with media reports implicating a close associate of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Responding to a public backlash, Zelenskyy called for the dismissal of his justice and energy ministers amid the investigation. They later submitted their resignations, the prime minister said.

Anti-corruption watchdogs the same agencies Zelenskyy sought to weaken earlier this year revealed the findings of a 15-month investigation, including 1,000 hours of wiretaps, resulting in the detention of five people, and another seven linked to about \$100 million in kickbacks in the energy sector.

Ukrainian officials are scrambling for European funds to manage mounting energy shortages as Moscow targets critical infrastructure and natural gas production to try to sink public morale. Meanwhile, Ukraine's outnumbered forces are retreating under relentless assaults in the nearly 4-year-old war.

The country has been plagued by corruption since gaining independence, and Zelenskyy was elected on a mandate to eliminate graft. Military procurement scandals led to the ouster of Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov in 2023.

But the timing of this one couldn't be much worse.

"Internally this scandal will be used to undermine unity and stability within the country. Externally, our enemies will use it as an argument to stop aid to Ukraine," said Oleksandr Merezhko, a lawmaker with Zelenskyy's party. "It looks really bad in the eyes of our European and



Herman Halushchenko, Ukraine's energy minister, speaks with the Associated Press during an interview in Kyiv, Ukraine, April 11, 2023.

American partners. While Russians destroy our power grid and people have to endure blackouts, someone at the top was stealing money during the war."

One lingering question is how high the corruption goes.

What investigators found

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau, known as NABU, refrained from identifying the suspects but said they included a businessman, a former adviser to the energy minister, an executive who oversaw physical protection at state energy company Energoatom, and others responsible for money laundering. It dubbed the scheme "Midas."

The agency also accused eight people of bribery, abuse of office and possession of disproportionate assets.

The investigation, which NABU said conducted over 70 raids, was welcomed by Zelenskyy, who urged officials to cooperate with it. Energoatom says the inquiry didn't disrupt its operations. NABU released excerpts of tapes in which the network, using code names and secretive language, discussed blackmail and pressuring Energoatom contractors to extract 10%-15% in kickbacks and bribes in exchange for them to do business without facing internal blocks.

The network took advantage of a regulation enforced during martial law prohibiting contractors from claiming debts in court from companies providing essential services, such as Energoatom, which has annual revenues of about \$4.7 billion. Four others worked to launder the money at a Kyiv office.

The tapes, which have not been independently verified by The Associated Press, say about \$1.2 million was given to a former deputy prime minister, whom the plotters called "Che Guevara," after the revolutionary leader.

Ministers resign

Amid the scandal, Zelenskyy called for the ouster of Justice Minister Herman Halushchenko, who also was a former energy minister, and current Energy Minister Svitlana Grynchuk. Prime Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko said they submitted their resignations. She also said the cabinet submitted proposals to apply sanctions against Timur Mindich, a close Zelenskyy associate, and businessman Alexander Tsukerman.

"Among other things, this is a matter of trust," Zelenskyy said in a video on his Telegram channel.

That has raised questions about what the country's highest officials knew of the

scheme, especially with war powers concentrated in the president's office. Zelenskyy tried to curtail Ukraine's anti-corruption watchdogs last summer but reversed course after widespread protests. Months later, the watchdogs released their findings.

A Zelenskyy partner

In the tapes, Mindich, 46, a co-owner of Zelenskyy's Kvarthal 95 media production company, is believed to be speaking under the code name "Karlsson." Under Zelenskyy, Mindich has gained clout and influence in multiple industries, including lucrative domestic drone production.

NABU has investigated his alleged connection with Fire Point, a drone manufacturer that has risen to prominence by securing government contracts. NABU investigated the company over concerns it misled the government on weapons prices.

"It looks like Zelensky distanced himself from Mindich long ago and when the scandal broke out, Zelensky didn't start to cover Mindich," Merezhko said. "But I don't rule out that someone from his entourage might have succumbed to temptation to make a quick buck."

The AP gained access to the company's factory in August. Its executives deny connections to Mindich.

"The key issue here is that the company supposedly affiliated to Mindich is getting government contracts outside the competition, because of the personal relationship to the administration," said Ukrainian investigative journalist Yuriy Nikolov, who looked into the businessman's dealings with Fire Point.

After his suspension as justice minister, Halushchenko said in a Facebook post that he would defend himself in court.

"I believe that being suspended for the duration of the investigation is a civilized and proper course of action," he said. "I will defend myself in the legal domain and prove my position."

Halushchenko, who was energy minister from 2021 until July when he took over as justice minister, has not been formally charged.

"The silver lining in this story is that we have effective and truly independent anti-corruption bodies which have shown concrete results," Merezhko said. "As it turns out, no one is above the law and no one is immune."

Political analyst Oleh Sakiian said the scheme involved "millions, tens of millions of dollars," but he also cautioned that its full scale is not known.

While not the largest corruption scandal in Ukraine's history, he noted it took place during wartime and is connected to "key players" in the government.

Discussions about delays fortifying energy sites

In the tapes from NABU, two discussions involved delays to building defensive fortifications for energy sites and waiting for a more profitable alternative before shielding them from Russian attacks.

The talk mentioned giving contracts to build defensive protections to a known company, and later to increase kickbacks up to 15%. An AP investigation this year revealed that despite over a year of warnings from Ukrainian officials about vulnerabilities near nuclear sites, the Energy Ministry failed to act quickly. □

JOIA Aruba by Iberostar to Host the World Owl Conference 2026



Eagle Beach, Aruba — November 12, 2025 — JOIA Aruba by Iberostar will host the next edition of the World Owl Conference 2026, scheduled to take place from September 6th to 10th 2026. This landmark event will mark the first time the international conference is held in the Caribbean.

The World Owl Conference (WOC) is a prestigious international forum that gathers leading scientists, conservationists, and educators to share research and advance global strategies for the protection of owl species. Since its first edition in 1987, the WOC has been held in cities such as Winnipeg (Canada), Canberra (Australia), Groningen (the Netherlands), Évora (Portugal), Pune (India), and La Crosse (Wisconsin, USA). In 2026, the event will arrive in the Caribbean for the first time, with Aruba set to welcome the world's foremost owl experts and organizations.

JOIA Aruba by Iberostar, a 5-star hotel locat-

ed in Eagle Beach, is part of Iberostar Hotels & Resorts, an international hospitality company committed to promoting a model of responsible tourism, with a strong focus on scientific collaboration and biodiversity protection within the destinations where it operates.

As part of this ongoing commitment, JOIA Aruba by Iberostar is an active member of the Shoco Supporting Community Conservation Agreement - a partnership with Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort and Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino for the support Aruba Birdlife Conservation (ABC)'s Shoco conservation project. This alliance promotes community-based conservation and education initiatives, such as the installation of artificial burrows in local schools, to engage Aruba's youth and foster a deeper sense of environmental stewardship and pride in protecting the island's national symbol.

The upcoming edition will place a special focus on island dwelling owls and the unique conservation challenges they face. Aruba's beloved Shoco (*Athene cunicularia arubensis*), an endemic burrowing owl and a cherished national symbol, will play a central role in the program, highlighting the importance of habitat preservation and biodiversity protection on the island.

In preparation for this historic event, Aruba Birdlife Conservation (ABC) has appointed Mr. Jelte Kuipers as National Coordinator of the World Owl Conference 2026. A Dutch-born emergency physician who has spent nearly seven years working in Aruba, Mr. Kuipers is an active volunteer with ABC and a passionate advocate for bird and nature conservation. In his new role, he will oversee the local organization, coordinate with partners at both local and international levels, and ensure that Aruba delivers an exceptional conference experience.

Greg Peterson, speaking on behalf of Aruba



Birdlife Conservation and the WOC 2026 Organizing Committee, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to host the event: "We feel humbled and proud that ABC has helped bring the World Owl Conference to Aruba. This gathering offers a remarkable opportunity to share knowledge, strengthen international collaboration, and raise awareness about the importance of protecting our Shoco and other vulnerable owl species around the world."

Arnaud Le Lanchon, General Manager of Iberostar Aruba, expressed his enthusiasm for hosting the event: "We are honored to welcome such a prestigious international conference and experts from around the world. Aruba's natural heritage is unique and precious, and we are proud to contribute to global conservation efforts while showcasing the island's beauty and biodiversity."

The World Owl Conference 2026 at JOIA Aruba by Iberostar promises to be a milestone for scientific exchange, conservation advocacy, and sustainable tourism in the Caribbean, highlighting the island's unique biodiversity and Iberostar's ongoing commitment to responsible tourism.

For further information on the World Owl Conference, please contact the email: contact@worldowlconference.info

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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Nestled in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba, L'Avenue brings a fresh breeze of Belgian charm to the Caribbean. Just over a year since its grand opening, this intimate bistro has quickly made its mark with its warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and elegant yet approachable ambiance.

Whether you're strolling through Palm Beach after a morning at the beach or looking for a special dinner spot, L'Avenue welcomes you with an inviting terrace, stylish décor, and the comforting aroma of Belgian classics crafted to perfection. It's a place where locals, travelers, food lovers, and beer connoisseurs come together — united by a love for great food, heartfelt service, and that unmistakable European flair.

At L'Avenue, every dish tells a story — one of tradition, seasonality, and bold yet balanced flavors. From crispy croquettes and perfectly poured Belgian beers



to steaming pots of fresh mussels flown in weekly, the menu offers something both comforting and surprising. Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience! But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

More Than a Bistro A Culinary Destination

L'Avenue is more than just a place to eat — it's a culinary destination. A thoughtfully curated menu, an extensive selec-

tion of premium Belgian beers, and an atmosphere that balances European elegance with island ease make it one of the most talked-about dining spots in Aruba.

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Come discover Belgium's best — right here at L'Avenue. 



Aruba Tourism Authority Honors Loyal Visitors at Bucuti & Tara Boutique Beach Resort!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the pleasure of recognizing one of Aruba's Distinguished Visitors. The honorees were presented with a certificate in appreciation for their many years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island.

This honorary certification is awarded on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba for 10, 20, or 35 consecutive years or more.

The three levels of recognition are:

- Distinguished Visitor – 10+ consecutive years visiting Aruba
- Goodwill Ambassador – 20+ consecutive years visiting Aruba
- Emerald Ambassador – 35+ consecutive years visiting Aruba

Distinguished Visitors Honored:

Mr. Michael & Mrs. Anita Layser from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, United States.

Ms. Candace Gumbs, representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, along with staff members of Bucuti & Tara Boutique Beach Resort, presented the certificate, offered gifts, and expressed heartfelt thanks to the honorees for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, as shared by the honorees:

- Aruba's people.
- "The beauty of Aruba"
- "The friends we made with staff and guest throughout the years"
- "The staff at Bucuti & Tara"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island." 

The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

ORANJESTAD—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to start blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)
One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudawecha, who was a epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudawecha. Upon telling Kudawecha that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudawecha was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the

tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudawecha, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aretima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aretima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed

in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aretima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers.

Kudawecha, satisfied to see Aretima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aretima's mother quickly

made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aretima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flow-



ers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □



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ACF strengthens international partnerships for nature conservation in The Netherlands



Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) recently completed a successful working visit to The Netherlands. A trip centered around the premiere screenings of the 'Turning the Tide' documentary but driven by a broader mission to strengthen collaboration, build meaningful connections, and expand ACF's international network for nature conservation in Aruba. The visit was led by Chief Conservation Officer, Natasha Silva, and Business Development, Marketing & Communications Manager, Edeline Berg.

Purpose and objectives of the visit

While the 'Turning the Tide' documentary served as the vehicle that brought ACF to The Netherlands, the trip had a wider purpose. This trip allowed ACF to engage dialogue, build resources and collaboration with like-minded organizations in The Netherlands. With this trip, ACF aimed to:

- Highlight Aruba's leadership in climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem restoration.
- Engage potential European funders and partners to support program development and growth.
- Strengthen ties with Dutch conservation organizations, research institutions, and networks.
- Raise public and media awareness of Aruba's natural heritage through new storytelling opportunities.

Strategic visits and collaboration meetings

Alongside the screenings, ACF met with a range of established and new partners to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and explore opportunities for collaboration. The team visited Naturalis Biodiversity Center, where they met with Dr. Ing. Vincent J. Kalkman, Project Leader Biodiversity Hotspots, who previously worked in Aruba on invertebrate biodiversity research and who recently conducted an island wide bioblitz.

At Waardenburg Ecology, discussions focused on potential co-operation in marine conservation, Tern management, and environmental education and outreach, and ACF also connected with Vogelbescherming Nederland through Janske van de Crommenacker, Program Manager for Caribbean Netherlands and no stranger to Aruba, to align on ongoing bird conservation initiatives. The team also met with director John de Hoon, nature team leader Johan van der Haven, and biologist Marisa Mangal of Stichting Vogelpark Avifauna. Here, the team discussed the long-term re-introduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon in Aruba and potential upcoming Lora breeding program. And finally, visits to and DiergaardeBlijdorp/Rotterdam Zoo provided opportunities to share experiences on coral restoration, coral rescue, and offshore coral breeding programs, as part of ongoing and emerging Dutch Caribbean marine conservation programs.

"Every meeting was a reminder that conservation thrives through connection," said ACF's Chief Conservation Officer, Natasha Silva. "These partnerships help us share knowledge, grow capacity, and ultimately strengthen the bridge between science, community, and conservation across the Kingdom."

'Turning the Tide' documentary screenings

The visit was anchored by two premiere screenings of 'Turning the Tide', a first-of-its-kind nature restoration documentary for Aruba on corals and mangroves, funded by the EU-RESEMBID Programme and produced in collaboration with Wageningen University & Research, ScubbleBubbles Foundation, and the University of Aruba. The first screening took place at Filmhuis Den Haag and was made possible through the generous support of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) with a second screening followed at Visum Mundi in Wageningen and made possible by Wageningen University & Research.

ACF's visit to The Netherlands marks an important step in expanding the independent foundation's international partnerships and positioning Aruba as a proactive voice in nature conservation. Together with its partners, ACF will continue to strengthen its conservation work both on land and at sea to protect, preserve, and restore the place we call home. □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko



The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly

shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is



blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

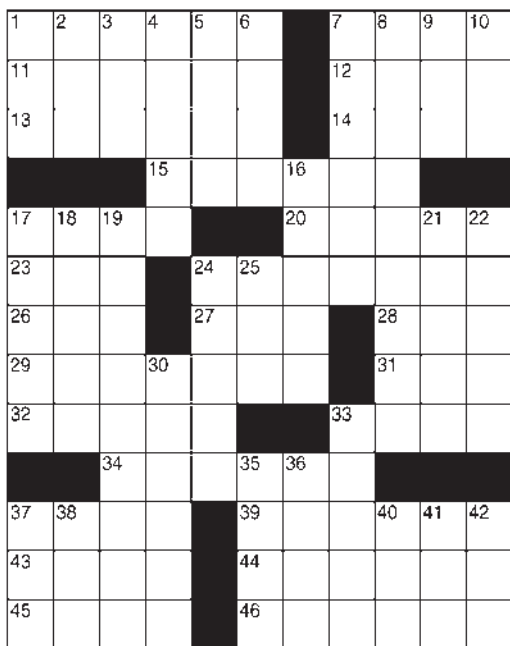
ACROSS

- 1 Lebanon trees
7 Racket
11 Like lemon juice
12 Infant's spot
13 Colombia's capital
14 Hindu hero
15 Germany's capital
17 Whittle down
20 Fossil resin
23 Stop — dime
24 Poster color
26 Bro's sibling
27 Little jump
28 Hosp. workers
29 Josephine, for one
31 Tear
32 Bank subtraction
33 Potato parts
34 Steered clear of
37 Farm unit
39 Paper worker
43 Cruise stop

- 44 Concert bonus
45 Stocking stuffers
46 Touched lightly

DOWN

- 1 Fare carrier
2 Green prefix
3 Use a spade
4 Sun-dried brick
5 Ceremony
6 Fight memento
7 Be frugal
8 Reddish fruit
9 Objective
10 CEO's deg.
16 Reading aids
17 Did some modeling
18 Cartoon genre
19 Reddish fruit
21 Bert's pal
22 Coarse files
24 Letter before
25 Dawn goddess
30 Metal fasteners
33 Decree
35 Profound
36 Writer Buchanan
37 Fitting
38 Dove call
40 Infant
41 Mine output
42 Wine choice



11-22

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-22 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

DST YXBZ DSFD AUBVQ LXWG
DGWT CFKUAL UQ BXD XBT
XC YAXXZ, YWD XC GTQOTRD
FBZ IXL UB TFRS XDSTG'Q

AUCT. — GURSGFZ YFRS

Cryptoquote: HUMANS MERELY
SHARE THE EARTH. WE CAN ONLY PROTECT
THE LAND, NOT OWN IT. — CHIEF SEATTLE



Cruise ship Schedule: Nov. 10 - 14 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	CALLS
MON	10	ENCHANTED PRINCESS CORAL PRINCESS CARNIVAL PRIDE	07.00 08.00 09.00	16.00 17.00 22.00	B C I	1 1 1
TUE	11	CARNIVAL HORIZON BRILLIANT LADY	09.00 10.00	23.00 22.00	B C	1 1
WED	12	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS MAJESTIC PRINCESS ROTTERDAM FREEWINDS	08.00 08.00 07.00 06.00	**** **** 17.00 ****	B C I E	1 1 1 1
THU	13	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS - Dept. MAJESTIC PRINCESS - Dept. MSC DIVINA	**** **** 07.00	18.00 16.00 14.00	B C I	 1
FRI	14	SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR KONINGS DAM	07.00 10.00	16.00 23.00	B C	1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



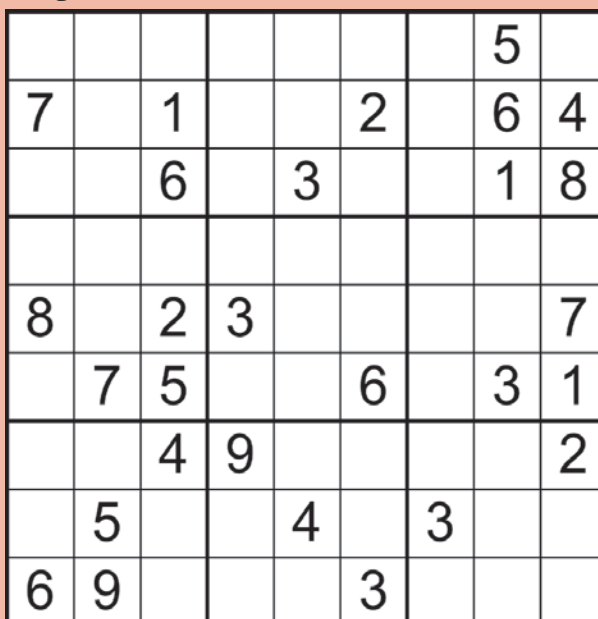
Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

11/13

Answer to previous puzzle

1	3	2	9	4	7	8	6	5
8	4	6	3	5	1	9	2	7
7	5	9	2	6	8	1	4	3
2	1	8	7	3	4	5	9	6
3	9	4	5	8	6	2	7	1
5	6	7	1	9	2	3	8	4
4	7	5	8	2	3	6	1	9
6	8	3	4	1	9	7	5	2
9	2	1	6	7	5	4	3	8

Difficulty: ★★★

11/12

Solar storms bring colorful northern lights to unexpected places

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN
NEW YORK (AP) — Solar storms brought colorful auroras to unexpected places on Tuesday night, and there could be more to come.

Space weather forecasters confirmed that storms reached severe levels, triggering vibrant northern lights in Europe including Hungary and the United Kingdom. In the U.S., the hues were spotted as far south as Kansas, Colorado and Texas.

There were some impacts to GPS communications and the power grid, Shawn Dahl with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a video posted on X.

The uptick in solar activity forced NASA on Wednesday to postpone the launch of Blue Origin's new rocket carrying Mars orbiters until conditions improve.

Over the past few days, the sun has burped out several bursts of energy called coronal mass ejections. Two have reached Earth, but at least one more is still on the way and could arrive sometime on Wednesday. Forecasters think this solar outburst could be the most energetic of the three and have issued a severe storm alert. How bright the auroras are and how far south they are visible will depend on when the burst gets



The northern lights fill the sky behind the Saint Joseph the Woodworker Shrine Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025, near Valley Falls, Kan. Associated Press

here and how it interacts with Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere.

How northern lights happen

The sun is at the maximum phase of its 11-year activity cycle, making the light displays more common and widespread. Colorful northern lights have decorated night skies in unexpected places and space weather experts say there are more auroras still to come.

Aurora displays known as the northern and southern lights are commonly visible near the poles, where charged particles from the sun interact with Earth's atmosphere.

Skygazers are spotting the lights deeper into the United States and Europe because the sun is going through a major face-lift. Every 11 years, its magnetic

poles swap places, causing magnetic twists and tangles along the way. □

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RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuero
Oriana Geerman

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
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Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

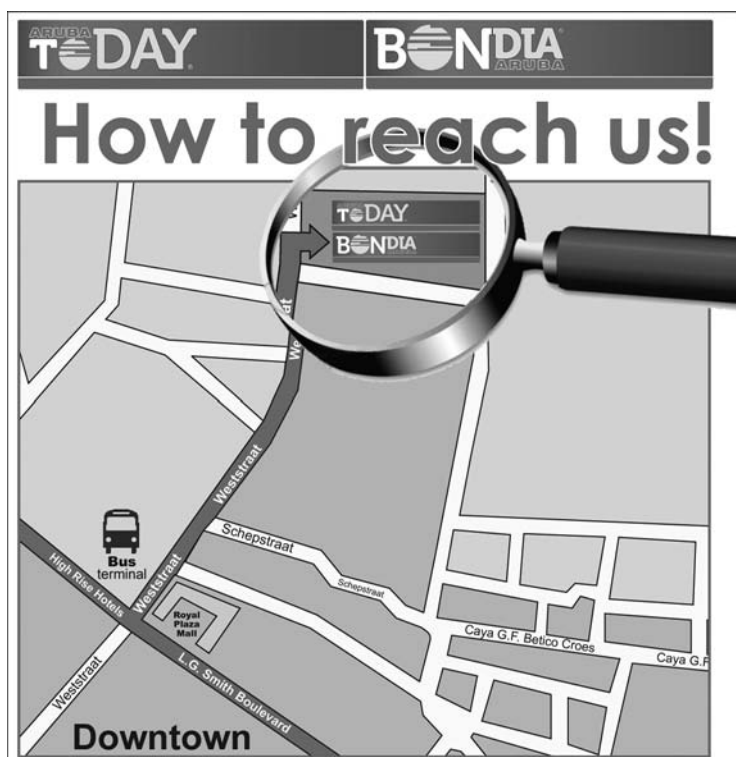
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Gal Gadot wins Israel's Genesis Prize for her wartime support

By JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

Israeli actor Gal Gadot has been awarded Israel's Genesis Prize in recognition of her strong support for the country at a time when many in the entertainment industry have criticized it over the war in Gaza.

Describing herself as a "proud Jew and a proud Israeli," the "Wonder Woman" star, who at times has paid a personal price for her advocacy, said she would donate the \$1 million prize to organizations committed to helping Israel recover from the trauma of its two-year war against Hamas.

"Israel has endured unimaginable pain," she said in a statement released by the prize on Tuesday. "Now we must begin to heal to rebuild hearts, families and communities."

The Genesis Prize, nicknamed "the Jewish Nobel" by Time magazine, is granted each year to a person for their professional achievements, contributions to humanity and commitment to Jewish values. Winners have donated the award to promote causes close to their hearts, such as battling antisemitism,



Gal Gadot poses with her new star at a ceremony honoring her on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press.

advancing women's rights or fighting for economic justice. The war in Gaza erupted with Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, in which militants killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and took over 250 others hostage.

While Israel received some international sympathy in the early days of the war, global opinion quickly turned

against it as its retaliatory offensive intensified. Health officials in Gaza say over 69,000 Palestinians have been killed, and the territory has suffered widespread destruction. Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire last month.

The negative sentiment toward Israel has reverberated in Hollywood, where

hundreds of industry workers, including some leading directors and actors, recently pledged to boycott the Israeli film industry.

Throughout the war, Gadot, who served in the Israeli military after high school, remained a fervent advocate for Israel. She campaigned for the release of hostages held by Hamas, met with

hostage families and released hostages and helped promote the screening in Los Angeles of a graphic film documenting the Hamas attack.

At times, she has faced pressure and criticism for this support.

Gadot, who played the wicked stepmother in "Snow White," has said she believes anti-Israel sentiment was a factor in the poor performance of the film early this year. When she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame last March, supporters of Israel and of Palestinians clashed nearby. And in August, hundreds of people from the film industry signed a letter calling on the Venice Film Festival to withdraw an invitation to Gadot. The festival's director rejected the call, though Gadot did not attend.

Stan Polovets, the co-founder and chair of the Genesis Prize Foundation, praised Gadot's "moral clarity and unwavering love for Israel," saying it had come at great personal and professional risk.

A date for the awards ceremony next year was not immediately announced. □

Cleto Escobedo III, Jimmy Kimmel's bandleader and childhood friend, dies at 59

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Late-night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel is mourning the death of one of his oldest friends — his show's bandleader, Cleto Escobedo III.

Kimmel announced Escobedo's death Tuesday on Instagram, saying "that we are heartbroken is an understatement." Escobedo was 59.

Escobedo and Kimmel met as children in Las Vegas, where they grew up across the street from each other. "We just met one day on the street, and there were a few kids on the street, and him and I just became really close friends, and we kind of had the same sense of humor. We just became pals, and we've been pals ever since," Escobedo said

in a 2022 interview for Texas Tech University's Southwest Collection oral history archive, disclosing that he and Kimmel were huge fans of David Letterman as kids.

Escobedo would grow up

to become a professional musician, specializing in the saxophone, and touring with Earth, Wind and Fire's Phillip Bailey and Paula Abdul. He recorded with Marc Anthony, Tom Scott and Take Six. When Kimmel

got his own ABC late-night talk show in 2003, he lobbied for Escobedo to lead the house band on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"

"Of course I wanted great musicians, but I wanted somebody I had chemistry with," Kimmel told WABC in 2015. "And there's nobody in my life I have better chemistry with than him."

In 2016, on Escobedo's 50th birthday, Kimmel dedicated a segment to his friend, recalling pranks with a BB gun or mooning people from the back of his mom's car.

"Cleto had a bicycle with a sidecar attached to it. We called it the side hack. I would get in the sidecar and then Cleto would drive me directly into garbage cans and bushes," Kimmel recalled. News of

Escobedo's death comes after Thursday's episode of "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" was abruptly canceled. David Duchovny, Joe Keery and Madison Beer were set as the show's guests. The date and cause of Escobedo's death weren't immediately known.

Escobedo's father is also a member of the Kimmel house band and plays tenor and alto saxophones. In January 2022, the father-son duo celebrated nearly two decades of performing on-screen together.

"Jimmy asked me, 'Who are we going to get in the band?' I said, 'Well, my normal guys,' and he knew my guys because he had been coming to see us and stuff before he was famous, just to come support me and whatever. □



This image released by Disney shows Cleto Escobedo on the set of "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" in March 2025.

Associated Press

Winter Olympics sports resist push to add cyclocross and cross-country running to their program

By GRAHAM DUNBAR

GENEVA (AP) — Organizers of traditional snow and ice sports said Wednesday they do not want events from summer federations added to their Winter Olympics program.

Cyclocross and cross-country running even indoors sports have been suggested as additions to the Winter Games for the 2030 Olympics hosted in the French Alps and Nice.

Those would be unwelcome "piecemeal proposals," the Winter Olympic Federations group of governing bodies said in a statement.

"The Winter Olympic Federations are firm in our belief that such an approach would dilute the brand, heritage, and identity that make the Olympic Winter Games unique a celebration of sports practiced on snow and ice, with distinct culture, athletes, and fields of play," said the group of sports including skiing, skating, biathlon, curling, luge, bobsled and skeleton.



A view of the stadium where speedskating will take place at the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics will take place, in Rho, outskirts of Milan, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025.

Associated Press.

A review of the Winter Games program and other issues was started by International Olympic Committee president Kirsty Coventry after she formally took office in June.

The winter program with just 116 medal events has room to expand compared with the squeezed Summer Games which had 329 in Paris last year.

Adding cyclocross and

cross-country running, which typically are raced on mud, would mean amending the IOC's Olympic Charter rules which require Winter Games sports to be played on snow and ice.

"Innovation should focus on evolving existing winter sports to attract broader participation and audiences while enhancing the appeal of the Olympic Winter Games," said Ivo Ferriani, who represents winter sports on the IOC executive board as president of the bobsled and skeleton federation. Ferriani noted the addition of ski mountaineering, or skimo, which makes its Olympic debut in February at the Milan Cortina Winter Games.

Olympic influence

Cyclocross and cross-country running have influential supporters in Olympic circles which created momentum toward a proposal for 2030. The presidents of the governing bodies of cycling and track and field David Lappartient and Sebastian Coe, respectively both were candidates in the IOC election won by Coventry. Still, the proposal did not convince the top official at the International Biathlon Union. □

Track to open LA Olympics, with women's 100-meter sprinters lining up three times in the same day

By EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

It will be a busy opening day of action at the Los Angeles Olympics for the fastest women in the world. As part of a seismic schedule change for the 2028

Games, track and field, and not swimming, will lead off the Olympics. In releasing the detailed schedule Wednesday, organizers revealed that the first day at the LA Coliseum, July 15, will include all three rounds

of the women's 100 meters. Sprinters normally run a maximum of two races in a day at a major event. It's a change the men will not have to deal with, but that a women's field that could include the last two world champions, Sha'Carri Richardson and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, and Olympic champ Julien Alfred are being given nearly three years to prepare for.

"To be the pre-eminent event on the first night of competition in the historic LA Memorial Coliseum, I think when we presented it to the athletes that way, there was excitement," said Janet Evans, the gold-medal swimmer serving as chief athlete officer for the Los Angeles Games. "A majority of athletes said to me, 'Just let me know. Let me know early, and I'll start training to run three 100s in

one day."

Swimming to take place at SoFi

Swimming has traditionally kicked off the Summer Games, but because the opening ceremony is taking place at SoFi Stadium, same as the swim meet, organizers decided to make the swap. It was not feasible to set up the pool in the stadium so quickly after the ceremony.

Evans, who won four Olympic gold medals in 1988 and 1992, said the prospect of swimming in what is largely considered LA's best new stadium in front of 38,000 fans is an opportunity her sport embraced. Also, swimmers are often forced to miss the opening because they compete the very next day.

"I could probably name on my two hands the swimmers I know who have

actually been to opening ceremonies," Evans said. Schedule not set up for McLaughlin-Levrone double

The schedule also makes it virtually impossible for Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone to try to double in both the 400 meters and the 400 hurdles.

McLaughlin-Levrone is the world-record holder and two-time defending champion in the hurdles. She took a year off from that to run in the 400 sprint this year, where at the world championships she became the first runner since 1985 to run the lap in less than 48 seconds (47.78). (Second-place finisher Marileidy Paulino also broke 48.)

McLaughlin-Levrone's coach, Bobby Kersee, had hinted at the possibility she might go for the double. □



Julien Alfred, of Saint Lucia, 4th left, crosses the finish line ahead of Sha'carri Richardson, of the United States, and Melissa Jefferson, of the United States, to win the women's 100 meters final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Saturday, Aug. 3, 2024, in Saint-Denis, France.

Associated Press.

Commanders hope road trip to Madrid will help team regroup after poor run

By **TALES AZZONI**

MADRID (AP) — Bringing the guys together for a road trip might be just what the Washington Commanders need to get the season back on track. The Commanders (3-7) are in Madrid to face the Miami Dolphins on Sunday in the NFL's final international game of the season. They're hoping some camaraderie and quality time together in one of Europe's top cities can help the team end a five-game losing streak.

"I told the team that today as a group, we are coming here to actually get stronger," Commanders coach Dan Quinn said Wednesday in his first news confer-



Washington Commanders quarterback Marcus Mariota (8) during a training session in Madrid, Spain, Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025, ahead of Sunday's NFL football game against Miami Dolphins. Associated Press

ence in Madrid. "Some of that is connection, some of that is our practice and the way that we can do that together. But all of it will be done together."

"That's the first part of us getting stronger together," Quinn added. "But that was the main goal, to get connected and actually get stronger during this week here together. And we think we can do that."

The Commanders are coming off a 44-22 loss at home to the Detroit Lions. Their last win was at the Los Angeles Chargers in Week 5.

"As a team, I think getting away, having an opportunity to really kind of hunker down together, it's been important, and it's been great," quarterback Marcus Mariota said. "I think guys going to dinner, just little things like that, connecting, especially with where we are in the season, I think it's important just to kind of step away and I think it's been good for us."

The game is the seventh NFL game abroad this season, the most ever since the league started making a push to expand globally.

Daniels and Payne out

Washington remains without quarterback Jayden Daniels because of a dislocated shoulder he suffered during the team's 38-14 loss to Seattle in Week 9. The Commanders will also be without defensive tackle Daron Payne, who was suspended for one game without pay by the NFL for hitting Detroit Lions receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown in the second quarter against the Lions.

Quinn said Payne visited with the NFL and apologized. The coach said it was "out of character for him to do that. So, he wanted to be able to express his remorse for that incident."

Execution struggles

Quinn took over defensive coordinator duties this week. He has blamed poor execution for the team's recent struggles. □



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